

REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 5 and 7 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 3, 4, 5 and 7 are amended. No new matter is added by these amendments, as support can be found at least on pages 2, 5 and 6 of the Applicants' disclosure. Favorable reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Blair in the January 10, 2008 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 3, 4 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §101 as drawn to nonstatutory subject matter. The above enumerated claims are amended in order to overcome this rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 3-5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,917,965 to Gupta et al. (hereinafter "Gupta"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,212,553 to Lee et al. (hereinafter "Lee"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

The Office Action asserts that Gupta and Lee together teach the combination of features as positively recited in independent claims 3, 5 and 7. However, the above references cannot reasonably be considered to teach the combination of features as positively recited in the above claims as amended. Specifically, the above references fail to teach a thrask generating module generating a plurality of thrasks, each of the thrasks including at least one message information item that is assigned a set of metadata, the metadata including task information independent of the message information of the thrask, as positively recited in the above claims.

Gupta teaches, at least in col. 2, lines 24-47, that an annotation may be sent via electronic mail to a single or a plurality of users, and that those sent and received annotations may be tracked by the user or groups of users via notifications. The annotations are sent as an element of an electronic mail, and notifications of the annotations involve notification of receipt of an electronic mail containing an annotation. This annotation information is dependent to the electronic mail that carries it, because it is embedded within that electronic mail and sent as part of the electronic mail.

Additionally, Lee teaches a system, on col. 4, lines 59-67, and col. 5, lines 1-13, where message follow-up information is associated with a message such as a message flag including due dates with reminders and past-due notices or response to the e-mail message. Here, Lee teaches information such as reminders and past-due notices, which is dependent upon the message itself, and for example, related to the date of receipt of the message to a particular recipient of the message.

In contrast, the subject matter of the pending claims teaches, as discussed above, task information independent of the message information of the thrask. This task information may be used, for example, to coordinate a distributed workflow/project flow management scheme, as discussed on page 2. Thrasks are used in this case to manage both an independent workflow or project flow system, incorporated into a message-based system, as discussed on pages 5 and 6 of the Applicants' Disclosure. However, these thrasks include metadata including task information independent of the message information of the thrask. Therefore, because both Gupta and Lee teach notifications dependent on the message itself provided to a user, they cannot reasonably be considered to teach or suggest task information independent of the message information of the thrask, as positively recited in the pending claims.

During the course of the personal interview, the Examiner agreed that the above features, as positively recited in pending independent claims 3, 5 and 7, are patentably distinct

over the applied references of Gupta and Lee. The Examiner agreed, as discussed above, that the applied references fail to teach or suggest task information independent of message information. Further, during a brief telephone conference, the Examiner agreed that the combination of features as positively recited in the pending claims distinguish over the applied references. Applicants appreciate this indication, and the preliminary indication of the allowability of the currently pending claims.

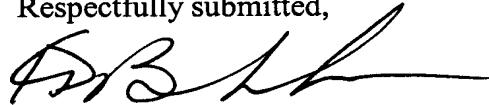
For at least the above reasons, the applied references of Gupta and Lee cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the subject matter recited in pending independent claims 3, 5 and 7. Additionally, claim 4 is also patentable at least for its dependence on independent claims as enumerated above, as well as for the patentably distinct subject matter that this claim recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejections of the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. §101 and §103 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 3, 4, 5 and 7 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Kirk D. Berkhimer
Registration No. 59,874

JAO:ARK/jth

Date: January 18, 2008

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 24-0037
--